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DISENCHANTMENT BY DECAPITATION.¹

DECAPITATION as a means of disenchantment occurs in two Middle English romances which deserve a closer study than they have yet received, — *The Carl of Carlisle*² and *The Turk and Gawain*.³ In *The Carl of Carlisle*, which belongs to the same group as the Old French *Chevalier à l'Espée*,⁴ the decapitation is the last act in a complicated process of unspelling. The bespelled person is a cruel giant who puts to death every stranger who seeks harborage in his castle. Gawain, with Kay and Bishop Baldwin, having lost his way, is forced to seek the Carl's hospitality, though the Bishop is well aware that he belongs to the class of personages known to modern scholars as "Difficult Hosts." Gawain's courtesy, however, enables him to become master of the situation. The savage host makes several extraordinary requests, but Gawain yields cheerful acquiescence to them all. Next morning the Carl bids Gawain take a sword and strike off his head. To this also Gawain assents, though not without expressing considerable reluctance. As soon as his head was off, the Carl, we are told, "stood up a man of the height of Sir Gawain," and thanked the knight for delivering him from the "false witchcraft" under which he had labored for forty years. It was this enchantment which had made him act so murderously; he had killed guests enough to make five cartloads of bones.

In *The Turk and Gawain*, the hero visits the Isle of Man under the guidance of a "Turk," that is, a dwarf. The island is inhabited by giants. The King of Man requires the performance of various difficult feats, all of which are accomplished by the Turk. Finally the

¹ Address by the Retiring President, at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society, Philadelphia, December 30, 1904.

² Madden, *Syr Gawayne*, pp. 187 ff., 256 ff.; Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript*, iii. 275 ff.

³ Madden, pp. 243 ff.; Hales and Furnivall, i. 88 ff.

⁴ Edited by Méon, *Nouveau Recueil de Fabliaux et Contes*, 1823, i. 127 ff., and by E. C. Armstrong, Baltimore, 1900.

heathen king is slain. Then the Turk bade Gawain strike off his head; and when this was done, he "stood up a stalwart knight," sang *Te Deum*, and thanked Gawain heartily.

On another occasion I hope to discuss these romances fully. For the present, I will, with your permission, confine myself to the single incident of Unspelling Decapitation, which is common to them both. In the *Carl*, the bespelled person is a cruel monster until he is released from enchantment; in the *Turk*, he takes the role of Helpful Attendant, performing superhuman tasks as a substitute for the hero. In both, he urges the reluctant Gawain to cut off his head,¹ and this is the final act in a somewhat complicated process of disenchantment. The efficacy of decapitation in undoing a spell is a widespread popular belief, and many of the tales in which it occurs are otherwise parallel either to *The Carl of Carlisle* or to *The Turk and Gawain*. In what follows, there is, of course, no attempt at exhaustiveness. My purpose has been to illustrate the belief by means of typical examples, and to bring out its significance as an article of the popular creed.

We may begin with the Decapitation of Helpful Animals.

In a Gaelic tale a serviceable steed bids the hero "take a sword and . . . take the head off me." The hero objecting, the horse replies: "In me there is a young girl under spells, and the spells will not be off me till the head is taken off me." In the same story a serviceable raven makes a similar request: "A young lad under spells am I, and they will not be off me till the head comes off me." The pair are transformed and make a fine couple.² This is an instructive example because it is outspoken. Usually, however, and more properly, the animal does not tell the hero or heroine why the beheading is to be performed. So, for instance, in a Swedish tale, *Den underbare Hästen*, the horse simply asks the hero to strike off his head, and when this is done he recovers his proper shape, that of a prince, the brother of the heroine.³

¹ There is no beheading in the Porkington version of the *Carl* (edited by Madden), but this text has omitted the *motif* of disenchantment altogether, to the manifest injury of the romance.

² *The Rider of Grianaig*, J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, no. 58, iii. 16-18; cf. Curtin, *Hero-Tales of Ireland*, pp. 354-5. See also *The Black Horse*, from Campbell's manuscript collections, Jacobs, *More Celtic Fairy Tales*, pp. 57 ff., and, on the supposed Indian provenience, Hartland, *Folk-Lore*, v. 331-2. Cf. Leskien u. Brugman, *Litauische Volkslieder u. Märchen*, p. 386, and Wollner's notes, pp. 537-42.

³ Eva Wigstrom, *Sagor ock Åfventyr upptecknade i Skåne*, p. 74, in *Nyare Bidrag till Kändedom, etc.*, vol. v. In the Norwegian ballad of *Åsmund Fregdegevar*, the hero, who has rescued the king's daughter from the land of the trolls by the aid of a magic horse, strikes off the horse's head: "deð vart ein kristen mann," namely, the queen's youngest brother, Adalbert, son of the English king (Landstad, *Norske Folkeviser*, no. 1, sts. 62-63, p. 21). Cf. Curtin,

In the Lettish epic *Needrischu Widwuds*,¹ the hero Widewut is much helped by a werewolf (*wilkata*), who, among other services, replaces the heads of the hero's two companions and brings the dead men to life by means of a magic elixir. The wolf then insists on being beheaded in his turn, and, when his request is granted, is transformed into a handsome youth.

The serviceable cat becomes a princess on being decapitated in Mme. d'Aulnoy's *La Chatte Blanche*, and in the Norwegian *Herrepeer* (Sir Peter).² In Perrault's *Le Chat Botté* there is no beheading and no disenchantment, but, instead, a delicious specimen of French wit: "Le Chat devint grand Seigneur, et ne courut plus après les souris, que pour se divertir."³ In a Tyrolese story the hero, at the cat's request, takes the animal by the hind legs and dashes her against the hearth till he sees her no more. Immediately she reappears as a beautiful maiden, whom he marries.⁴

In the Welsh Gypsy tale of *The Black Dog of the Wild Forest*, two helpful little dogs, Hear-all and Spring-all, who have saved the hero's life, require him to cut off their heads, threatening to devour him if he refuses. As Jack travelled on, grieving, "he turned his head round at the back of his horse, looking behind him, and he saw two of the handsomest young ladies coming as ever he saw in his life." They are Hear-all and Spring-all.⁵ Similarly, three black dogs in a German tale, who have served the king well, are beheaded

Myths and Folk-Tales of the Russians, etc., pp. 293, 405, in both of which the horse makes the reason known. Bayard, the helpful horse in *Le Prince et son Cheval* (Cosquin, *Contes pop. de Lorraine*, i. 133 ff.), does not ask to be disenchanted, but simply requests his dismissal. He is certainly bespelled, however: "Je suis prince aussi bien que vous : je devais rendre cinque services à un prince" (i. 137). A Christianized incident of this sort is in Vernaleken, *Österreichische Kinder u. Hausmärchen*, no. 46, p. 252: a horse says, "Hew off my head," and when this is done, a white dove flies forth and up to heaven.

¹ Put together by Lautenbach-Jusmira, song 17, Jelgawâ, 1891, pp. 211 ff.; see summary by H. Wissendorff de Wissukuok, *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, xii. 160-1.

² Asbjørnsen og Moe, *Norske Folkeeventyr*, 2d ed., 1852, p. 162 (translated by Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, 2d ed., 1859, p. 347); so in *Kong Knud fra Knølände* (variant), p. 431, and in another version (in which the cat becomes a prince), p. 433. See Lang, *Perrault's Popular Tales*, 1888, *Introd.*, p. lxxii. Asbjørnsen and Moe cite a number of parallels. Cf. the German *märchen* of *Der Federkönig* (Haltrich, *Deutsche Volksmärchen aus dem Sachsenlande in Siebenbürgen*, 3d ed., 1882, p. 50). In *Das weisse Kätzchen* (Kuhn u. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen*, p. 334), the kitten's paws and head are cut off, and the transformation begins on the amputation of the first paw.

³ Lang's ed., as above, p. 35.

⁴ Zingerle, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 1852, no. 9, p. 52; ed. 1870, p. 42.

⁵ Groome, *Gypsy Folk-Tales*, pp. 267-71. There are unspelled green dogs (which remind us of the fancy *brachets* in French romance) in a tale in the *Celtic Magazine*, xiii. 279.

at their own request: "Siehe, da standen nun einmal drei Königs-söhne."¹

In the West Highland tale of *Mac Iain Direach*, the fox, who has assisted the hero materially, remarks as they come to a spring by the side of the road: "Now, Brian, unless thou dost strike off my head with one blow of the White Glave of Light into this spring,"² I will strike off thine." Brian complies, and "in the wink of an eye, what should rise up out of the well, but the son of the King that was father of the Sun Goddess."³

When we pass from Helpful Animals who are unspelled by decapitation to Helpful Servants who are released from enchantment by the same means, we approach sensibly nearer to the situation in *The Turk and Gawain*. Frequently (as in that poem) the helpful attendant wears a monstrous or dwarfish likeness till he is disenchanted.⁴

In the Welsh Gypsy story of *An Old King and his Three Sons in England*, Prince Jack has been entertained and helped at various stages of his journey by three brothers, whose heads, at their request, he cuts off and throws into a well. What happens may be seen from the case of the eldest of the three: "No sooner he does it, and flings his head in the well, than up springs one of the finest young gentlemen you would wish to see; and instead of the old house and the frightful-looking place, it was changed into a beautiful hall and grounds." There is complete disenchantment, it will be observed, of place as well as of person. This oldest brother is described as a frightful creature: "He could scarcely walk from his toenails curling up like rams' horns that had not been cut for many hundred years, and big long hair," and so on.⁵

¹ Haltrich, as above, pp. 107-8.

² The spring is significant. Immersion in water or some other liquid is often a means of dissolving a charm, and sometimes operates as one of several measures conducing to that end. See Child, *Ballads*, i. 338, 507, ii. 505, iii. 505, and add Laistner, *Rätsel der Sphinx*, § 31, i. 252 ff.

³ J. F. Campbell, no. 46, ii. 358-9. Campbell's story was derived from John Macdonald the tinker, whom Mr. Hindes Groome makes out to have been a Gypsy (*Gypsy Folk-Tales*, pp. lviii-lxi; cf. Nutt, *Folk-Lore*, x. 241-2). It is reprinted, with valuable notes, in Groome's *Gypsy Folk-Tales*, pp. 283-9.

⁴ Cormac's *Glossary*, s. v. *prull*, Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, pp. 36-38, and O'Donovan's translation, ed. Stokes, pp. 135-7; O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii. 89; Nutt, *Revue Celtique*, xii. 194-5; the same, *Holy Grail*, pp. 139-41, 205-6; Zimmer, Kuhn's *Ztschr.*, xxviii. 438; *Imtheacht na Tromdhainhe*, ed. Connellan, Ossianic Society, *Transactions*, v. 114 ff.; *Life of S. Féchin of Fore*, §§ 37-38, ed. Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, xii. 342-5; MacInnes, *Folk and Hero Tales*, pp. 91-93 (with Nutt's note, pp. 454, 467-8); Maynadier, *Wife of Bath's Tale*, pp. 65 ff., 195 ff.; J. F. Campbell, iii. 299-300; Curtin, *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland*, pp. 235 ff.; Mac Dougall, *Folk and Hero Tales*, pp. 35 ff.; Hyde, *Beside the Fire*, pp. 18 ff.

⁵ Groome, *In Gipsy Tents*, 1880, pp. 299-317; the same, *Gypsy Folk-Tales*,

In the Irish *Mac Cool, Faolan, and the Mountain*, an old forester, who has assisted Dyeermud and Faolan in some very perilous adventures, asks Dyeermud to cut off his head. Dyeermud consents after the old man has told him that he is under enchantment and cannot be otherwise released. "He cut off his head with one blow, and there rose up before him a young man of twenty-one years." He had been enchanted by his stepmother.¹

Sometimes the person disenchanted by beheading is not a helpful animal or attendant, but the heroine of the story. There is a good instance in the Saxon tale of *Sausewind*.² Here a woman who lives with the ogre Sausewind tells him of three enchanted princesses and gets from him the answer: "Wenn einer ein Schwert nimmt und schlägt dir den Kopf ab, so bist du die eine; dort unten am Wasser steht ein Erlenbusch, wenn davon der rechte Ast . . . abgehauen wird, so ist das die zweite; und oben am Wasser steht noch ein Busch, wird davon ebenfalls ein Ast abgehauen, so ist das die dritte; dann sind alle drei wieder beisammen." A visitor — a young man — then effects the disenchantment in the way prescribed. Again, in the Saxon tale of *Der dumme Hans* (a variant of a well-known *märchen*),³ Hans serves a mouse, the mistress of an enchanted castle, for three years. At the end of the third year, the mouse bids him beat her till she is covered with blood (*blutruinstig*). He does so. Immediately the castle is disenchanted and full of life; the mouse becomes a crown-princess and marries Hans. In a variant,⁴ a cat takes the place of the mouse, and Hans has to cut wood during his three years of service, make a huge fire, and finally throw the cat into the flames.

Sometimes the disenchanted person is a prince, and the maiden who releases him wins him as a husband. Thus in a West Highland tale⁵ which is a variant of the well-known *Frog Prince*, the frog, for whom the girl has made a bed beside her own, finally says: "'There

no. 55, pp. 220-32; see also *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 1891, iii. 110-20. From the first of these publications the tale was reproduced, with changes and comments of which Mr. Hindes Groome complains (*Gypsy Folk-Tales*, p. 232), by Jacobs, *More English Fairy-Tales*, pp. 132-45, 232-3.

¹ Curtin, *Hero-Tales*, pp. 510-11.

² Schambach u. Müller, *Niedersächsische Sagen u. Märchen*, pp. 260 ff.

³ The same, pp. 268 ff.

⁴ The same, p. 368. This story has great similarities to the Swedish *märchen* of *Den Förtrollade Grodan* (Hyltén-Cavallius and Stephens, *Svenska Folk-Sagor och Åfventyr*, no. 15, i. 251 ff.), translated by Thorpe, *Yule-Tide Stories*, pp. 226 ff. (*The Enchanted Toad*). In Afanasief, vol. v. no. 28 (Ralston, *Russian Folk-Tales*, p. 134), a helpful bull-calf tells the hero to kill him and burn his carcass; from the ashes there spring a horse, a dog, and an apple tree, all three of which play an important part in the next act of the drama.

⁵ J. F. Campbell, no. 33, ii. 130 ff.

is an old rusted glave behind thy bed, with which thou hadst better take off my head, then be holding me longer in torture.' She took the glave and cut the head off him. When the steel touched him, he grew a handsome youth; and he gave many thanks to the young wife, who had been the means of putting off him the spells, under which he had endured for a long time." In an Annandale version of *The Frog Prince*, the frog asks the girl to cut off his head with an axe.¹ In Grimm's version and some others, the frog is dashed against the wall by the girl in anger at its request to be taken into her bed, and the transformation follows.²

The *Frog Prince* is particularly interesting, since it combines, in some of its versions, disenchantment by personal contact with disenchantment by decapitation or by some other method of killing the magical body. In some forms of the great class of "animal-spouse" tales, the mysterious husband is a man by night and an animal (frog, serpent, wolf, etc.) by day, and lays aside his beast-skin when he assumes human shape.³ This gives us a clear insight into the real meaning of disenchantment by beheading. We shall return to the point later.

Especially important for the illustration of *The Carl of Carlisle* are the instances in which the bespelled person who is released by decapitation is a cruel and murderous demon or monster until he is

¹ R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, 1842, p. 52 (ed. of [1870], pp. 88-89), from C. K. Sharpe, who learned it from a nurse about 1784.

² See R. Köhler, *Orient u. Occident*, ii. 330; Landau, *Ztschr. f. vergl. Litteraturgeschichte*, i. 17. There is an English version from Holderness in Jones and Kropf, *Folk-Tales of the Magyars*, Folk-Lore Society, pp. 404-5, in which, as in a version of *The Frog Prince* given by F. Pfaff in his *Märchen aus Löbenfeld* (*Alemannia*, xxvi. 87, 88), the frog is taken into bed, but there is neither smashing nor decapitation. In Haltrich, *Deutsche Volksmärchen aus dem Sachsenlande in Siebenbürgen*, 3d ed., 1882, p. 37, a little creature, apparently a dwarf or elf, who has been changed into a toad by enchantment, resumes his proper shape when the toad is smashed to pieces. Cf. Laistner, *Rätsel der Sphinx*, i. 59.

³ On the Frog Prince or Princess, and on the burning of the frog (or other) skin or of the whole frog to effect the transformation or to ensure its permanence, see Benfey, *Pantschatantra*, i. *Einl.* § 92, pp. 266-9 (where there are many references). There is some good material in De Gubernatis, *Zoölogical Mythology*, ii. 376 ff. See also *Der Prinz mit der Schweinshaut*, Köhler, *Kleinere Schriften*, i. 315 ff. A Zulu story of a prince in serpent form (Callaway, *Nursery Tales of the Zulus*, i. 321 ff.) is a fine example of confusion between a person who really has the shape of a serpent and one who is disguised by being clad or inclosed in a serpent's skin. The narrator cannot keep the distinction in mind at all. For one shape by day, another by night, see Child, *Ballads*, i. 290, iv. 454, v. 289; Maynadier, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, 1901, pp. 201 ff.; Kroeber, *Cheyenne Tales*, no. 18, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, xiii. 181. Many references for the transformation of animal spouses are collected by S. Prato, *Bulletin de Folklore*, i. 316-35.

relieved from enchantment. This comes out clearly in the first adventure of *Art and Balor Beimenach*.¹ The princess of Greece will not marry Art unless he brings her the head of the Gruagach of the Bungling Leaps. Art fights the monster thrice. The first time he beheads him, but the body goes down through the earth, the head follows, and the next day the gruagach is whole and twice as strong as before. The second day Art seizes the head before it has time to sink into the earth and starts off with it toward the king's castle. On the way he meets three men with a headless body. Art foolishly allows them to apply the gruagach's head to the trunk, and on the instant men, head, and body go down through the earth. The third day a raven carries off the head. Instructed and helped by a friendly old man, Art recovers the head, which he carries to the castle of the king of Greece. The princess consents to marry him, but he refuses her. Acting on the old man's instructions, Art carries the head back to *him*. "The old man threw the head on a body which was lying in the cabin; the head and the body became one, and just like the old man." The old man says: "The gruagach was my brother, and for the last three hundred years he was under the enchantment of . . . the only daughter of the King of Greece. The princess is old, although young in appearance; my brother would have killed me as quickly as he would you; and he was to be enchanted till you should come and cut the head off him, and show it to the princess, and not marry her, and I should do as I have done. My brother and I will stay here, take care of our forests, and be friends to you."²

The Highland tale of *The Widow and her Daughters*³ is another case in point. It is a Blue Beard story, curiously modified by the motif of unspelling decapitation. A great gray horse (who is also called a king, and who apparently is a man by night)⁴ abducts a widow's three daughters one after another. He decapitates the first two for entering a forbidden chamber. The third escapes by a ruse and reaches her mother's house. Her lover pursues "in a wild rage." "When he reached the door he drove it in before him. She was standing behind the door, and she took his head off with the bar.

¹ Curtin, *Hero-Tales*, pp. 312 ff.

² The same, p. 323.

³ J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, no. 41, ii. 265 ff. See Campbell's references, ii. 275. Köhler, *Orient and Occident*, ii. 679 (*Kleinere Schriften*, i. 256-7), and *Jahrb. f. rom. Litt.*, vii. 151 ff. (*Kleinere Schriften*, i. 312 ff.), adds little that helps us here. See also Laistner, *Rätsel der Sphinx*, ii. 101. In *Die singende Rose* (Zingerle, *Kinder u. Hausmärchen*, 2d ed., 1870, no. 30, p. 154), an old graybeard makes the princess strike off his head; a key comes out of it, which opens all the doors and chests in the castle.

⁴ This may be said to be implied, though it is nowhere stated.

Then he grew a king's son, as precious as ever came," and they were married.¹

The very formidable giant called the Bare-Stripping Hangman, in the Gaelic tale of that name,² turns out to be under spells, from which he is released when the egg which contains his life has been crushed, and when his hands and feet have been cut off and cast into a fire. "As soon as the hair of the head was singed and the skin of the feet burnt, the very handsomest young man they ever beheld sprang out of the fire." He is the king's younger brother, "who was stolen in his childhood." This is also an instructive example. The Bare-Stripping Hangman belongs to the class of giants who have no soul in their body,—Koshchei the Deathless, *corps-sans-âme*, Punchkin, and the rest,³—and should be destroyed, not disenchanted. By the addition of the disenchantment *motif*, the monster is made into a bespelled mortal.⁴

The idea that fierce or destructive creatures need only to be subdued or disenchanted to make them kindly, or even to win them to marriage, is familiar enough from the story of Brynhildr. An instructive instance from North America is the Dakota legend of two cannibalistic wives who wish to kill their husbands, but become harmless when freed from the spell. The phrase is, "He made them good."⁵ There is a very interesting parallel in the wild Armenian tale of *Zoolvisia*, which also shows the confusion between an immortal won as a bride and a mortal released from spells.⁶

¹ In a variant reported by Campbell (ii. 274-5), the transformation is missing. Here the girl beheads the giant (who is previously called a horse) with a sword and holds it on the spinal marrow till this cools, in order that the head may not go on again. This is clearly the proper ending. It is instructive for our present purpose to observe how the idea that beheading releases from enchantment has affected the catastrophe in the other version.

² Mac Dougall, *Folk and Hero Tales*, pp. 76 ff.

³ See Cosquin, *Contes pop. de Lorraine*, i. 173 ff.; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, index, under *external soul*; Ralston, *Russian Folk-Tales*, pp. 84 ff.; Curtin, *Russian Myths and Folk-Tales*, pp. 165 ff.; J. W. Wolf, *Deutsche Märchen u. Sagen*, pp. 87-93; Rand, *Legends of the Micmacs*, p. 245; Köhler, *Orient u. Occident*, ii. 100-103 (*Kleinere Schriften*, i. 158-61); Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 1890, ii. 296 ff., 2d ed., 1900, iii. 351 ff.; Sekleman, *The Golden Maiden and other Folk Tales and Fairy Stories told in Armenia*, Cleveland and New York, 1898, p. 133; Friis, *Lappiske Eventyr og Folkesagn*, pp. 46, 51.

⁴ Cf. a similar confusion in Maspons y Labrós, *Lo Rondallayre*, *Quentos populars catalans*, no. 27, ii. 104-10.

⁵ S. R. Riggs, *Dakota Myths*, in *Contributions to North American Ethnology*, ix. 141-2.

⁶ A king's son and his companions follow an antelope into a forest, where they find a tent by a fountain. Within is a table spread with delicious viands. The prince does not eat or drink, like his companions, but explores the neighborhood and is shocked to find, not far from the tent, a heap of human skeletons. The

A few other examples of disenchantment by decapitation may be cited to show how readily this feature attaches itself to almost any kind of tale of supernatural creature.

In a German tale a girl hears night after night a voice calling on her to rise. At last she gets out of bed and sees a woman, who asks her to come and free her. The girl follows through a long subterranean passage, entering at length a brilliantly lighted hall. Here sit three black men at a table, writing, and on the table lie two bright swords. "Take one of these swords," says the woman, "and cut off my head: *so bin ich erlöst.*" The girl is about to obey, when her brother, who has followed her, interferes. The woman seizes the girl angrily and throws her violently to the floor, so violently that she becomes a heap of ashes. Then there is a loud noise, and palace and all disappear.¹

A cowherd is besought by a White Lady to strike off her head, since he alone, she says, can release her. He alleges, in excuse, that he has no axe. She fetches one with a silver handle, but he runs away. In another form of the same story, the White Lady brings with her a block, a broad-axe, and a bunch of keys. She tells the herd that she is under a ban (*verwünscht*), and begs him to cut her head off before noon, in order to release her. She promises him great treasures. He delays too long, and she vanishes, declaring that not for another hundred years will one be born who can set her free.² This is an ordinary legend of a White Lady, the only peculiarity consisting in the manner of disenchantment: kissing is far more common.³ In another version the White Lady conducts the peasant into a hill and gives him treasure, which, however, disappears when twelve o'clock strikes and the blow has not been dealt.⁴

Disenchantment by beheading is, by a singular confusion, introduced into a Swabian version of the widespread story of the *Thankful Dead Man*. A bird flies to Karl's window with a dagger in its

food and water are poisoned, and all his companions die. Soon horsemen approach and pillage the dead men, the prince looking on from a place of concealment. The robber leader turns out to be a beautiful virago, Zoolvisia, with whom he falls in love. She it was who had enticed hunters to the spot in the form of an antelope. The youth visits Zoolvisia's castle and manages to deprive her of the talisman on which her power depends. "You have overcome me," says Zoolvisia; "you are brave and a real hero worthy of me. No one except you has ever heard my voice and lived. Now my talisman is broken, and I have become a mere woman." Thereupon she accepts the prince as her husband. Sekleman, *The Golden Maiden and other Folk Tales and Fairy Stories told in Armenia*, 1898, pp. 59 ff.

¹ Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen u. Märchen*, no. 94, pp. 99-100.

² Schambach u. Müller, *Niedersächsische Sagen u. Märchen*, no. 106, pp. 77-78.

³ See examples in Child, *Ballads*, i. 307 ff., 338, note, ii. 502, 504, iii. 504, iv. 454, v. 214, 290; Schofield, *Studies on the Libeaus Desconus*, in *Studies and Notes*, iv. 199 ff.

⁴ Schambach u. Müller, no. 107, p. 79.

beak and tells him to cut off its head. The bird has assisted him, and Karl is unwilling, but at last he obeys. The head of the bird falls into the room ; the trunk flies away, and there stands before Karl the spirit of the merchant whose corpse he had ransomed.¹

So far, we have confined our attention, in the main, to *decapitation* as a means of unspelling, but we have compared a few stories in which some other forms of violent death have the same effect. Beheading, then, is only a special means of putting to death : the main point is to kill the enchanted body. Thus in the Irish *Mac Cool, Faolan, and the Mountain*, Faolan pierces a man with his sword in the darkness. "The man fell dead ; and then, instead of the old man that he seemed at first, he rose up a fresh young man of twenty-two years." He was Faolan's uncle, and could not be freed from enchantment till pierced with a particular sword, which Faolan carried.²

Transformation from a dwarf to a man, as in *The Turk and Gawain*, occurs in an Austrian tale, *Der erlöste Zwerg*. A laborer gives a dwarf such a stroke in the head that he falls dead ; but he immediately becomes a beautiful youth and thanks the laborer for his "Erlösung."³

The *Kathā-sarit-sāgara* tells of a Vidyādhara who has been compelled by a curse to take the form of a camel. He is to be restored only when he is killed in that form by a certain king, — which happens.⁴ So, in the same collection, a Yaksha is doomed by a curse to be a lion till he is killed by a certain king with an arrow. This happens, and he regains his human form.⁵

The following is perhaps merely an anecdote of condign punishment after death, not an instance of disenchantment. A *Senn* in the Watthenthal saw a red bullock, which advanced in a threatening way. He caught him by the horns and forced him over the brink of a ravine. The bullock fell and was dashed to pieces. Up came the spirit of another *Senn*, and thanked him for his release. He had masqueraded in this shape as a punishment for once having thrown a peasant's bullock into this chasm.⁶

¹ E. Meier, *Deutsche Volksmärchen aus Schwaben*, no. 42, p. 151. Cf. Simrock, *Der gute Gerhard u. die dankbaren Todten*, Bonn, 1856, p. 57. On the Thankful Dead, see Hippe, Herrig's *Archiv*, lxxxi. 141 ff., and Kittridge, *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, viii. 250, n.

² Curtin, *Hero-Tales*, pp. 495-6. The incident is really out of place in this tale, which, at this point, is a case of the attempt to resuscitate dead warriors (the "Hilda-saga").

³ Vernaleken, *Österreichische Kinder u. Hausmärchen*, p. 171.

⁴ Bk. xii. ch. 69, Tawney, ii. 141-2.

⁵ Pt. i. ch. 6, Tawney, i. 37.

⁶ Von Alpenberg, *Deutsche Alpensagen*, no. 98, pp. 96-97.

Often a wound that is not sufficient to cause death is enough to effect a disenchantment, so as to make the person who suffers it return to his proper shape. Indeed, the mere drawing of blood may be all that is required. So in a story from Annam, a farmer, while cutting grass, accidentally amputates the tail of a serpent. The snake immediately becomes a fine young man.¹ Again, in a story from Brittany, a beautiful woman has been changed into a turtle. Two men are fighting for her hand. Throwing herself between them to end the combat, she is wounded, and, as soon as her blood flows, her metamorphosis is at an end.² In a legend of Auvergne a wicked baron is condemned for his crimes to wander as a *loup-garou* till a Christian shall make his blood flow. Wounded by a woodcutter, he resumes his human form and dies instantly.³ In a Lapland tale a lad draws blood from the hand of one of two fairy maidens who are dancing about him. Instantly the boatload of persons among whom the women have come vanishes, boat and all. Only the maiden remains. "Now you must take me to wife," says she, "since you have drawn blood upon me."⁴

In a Gypsy story from Transylvania, two wild geese, on being shot, fall to the ground as two beautiful maidens.⁵ In a Maori legend, the god Maui, in pigeon-form, is hit with a stone, and he immediately turns into a man.⁶ A precisely similar incident is found in the Irish *Wooing of Emer*: Derbforgaill, daughter of the King of Lochlann, wishing for the love of Cuchulinn, takes the form of a bird and flies to Ulster, along with one of her maids, who is also in bird-likeness. Cuchulinn wounds her with a stone from a sling. Immediately both resume their mortal shape. The rest of the saga does not now concern us.⁷ In the Latin *De Rebus Hiberniae Admirandis*, as

¹ Landes, *Contes et Légendes Annamites*, pp. 12-13. In a Tyrolean story, a bride accidentally steps on her snake-husband's tail and crushes it, whereupon he becomes a handsome prince: Schneller, *Märchen u. Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, no. 25, p. 65 (see Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*, pp. 324-5, with the references).

² Sébillot, *Contes populaires de la Haute-Bretagne*, [i.] 13-14.

³ Antoinette Bon, *Revue des Trad. Pop.*, v. 217-18 (reproduced by Sébillot, *Litt. Orale de l'Auvergne*, p. 231).

⁴ Friis, *Lappiske Eventyr og Folkesagn*, no. 7, pp. 24-25, cf. p. 39.

⁵ Von Wlislocki, *Märchen u. Sagen der transylvanischen Zigeuner*, no. 14, p. 33. In a Lithuanian tale, St. George (*Jurgis*), tired with hunting, sits down on a stone; out comes a black serpent and creeps towards him; he shoots her down and she immediately becomes a beautiful maid, whom he marries: Veckenstedt, *Mythen, Sagen und Legenden der Zamaiten*, i. 289-90. Veckenstedt's collection is discredited (see Karlowicz, *Mélusine*, v. 121 ff.), but this incident must be substantially correct.

⁶ Buller, *Forty Years in New Zealand*, London, 1878, p. 185.

⁷ *Tochmarc Emire*, translated by Kuno Meyer, *Archæological Review*, i. 304 (same, revised, in Hull, *Cuchullin*, p. 82). Cf. Zimmer, *Haupt's Ztschr.*, xxxii.

well as in the *Mirabilia* in Todd's *Irish Nennius*,¹ there is an account of a man who threw a stone and brought down a swan. Running to pick up the bird, he found it was a woman. She told him that she was thought to have died, but that really she was carried off in the flesh by demons. He restored her to her astonished relatives. In a German story, Hans cuts and slashes among a lot of animals with a sword, whereupon they are disenchanted and become mortals.²

We have already seen that decapitation, etc., must have been regarded as a slaying of the enchanted body (the beast or bird form) and therefore as the release of the human shape, so that the article of the primitive creed which we are studying has its close association with the belief in swan-maidens and werewolves and their feather-garment or beast-skin. The real (human) body was thought of as clad in the enchanted body or covered by it. This comes out with perfect clearness in those stories in which the enchanted animal is to be opened or skinned, and in which, when this is done, the real person emerges from the skin or belly.

Thus the Breton Péronic kills and skins the enchanted horse at its own request. He is much surprised "de voir sortir de sa peau un beau prince."³ In the same collection, a black cat, born of a woman, asks to be placed on its back on a table and to have its belly ripped up with a sword. This done, "il en sortait aussitôt un beau prince."⁴

217-18; Kuno Meyer, *Revue Celtique*, xi. 437-8; Nutt's note in Mac Innes, *Folk and Hero Tales*, p. 477; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, iii. 50.

¹ An hexameter list of the Wonders of Ireland, printed by Thomas Wright, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ii. 103-107. This is no. 18 in the list (p. 105), and no. 21 in that given in Todd's *Irish Nennius*, pp. 210-11. It does not occur in Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hiberniae*, ii. 4 ff. (*Opera*, Rolls Series, v. 80 ff.), nor in the Norse *Speculum Regale* (see Kuno Meyer, *Folk-Lore*, v. 299 ff.). Clearly by "demons" we are to understand "fairies." The idea that persons thought to be dead have really been abducted by the fairies is common in Ireland and elsewhere. It underlies the beautiful Middle English romance of *Sir Orfeo*, which, as the present writer has conjectured, may be based on a combination of the Irish tale of the *Wooing of Etain* with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice (*American Journal of Philology*, vii. 176 ff.; *Studies and Notes*, viii. 196, note; cf. Brandl, Paul's *Grundriss*, ii. 630; Bugge, *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi*, vii. 108; Herz, *Spielmannsbuch*, 2d ed., pp. 361-2).

² Vernaleken, *Österreichische Kinder u. Hausmärchen*, no. 54, p. 316.

³ Luzel, *Contes populaires de Basse-Bretagne*, ii. 66-67; cf. the modern Irish *Story of Conn-edá*, translated by N. O'Kearney, *Cambrian Journal*, ii. 101 ff., 1855 (reprinted in *Folk-Lore Record*, ii. 188-90, and by Yeats, *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales*, pp. 306 ff.).

⁴ The same, iii. 166. So also in *Le Chat et les deux Sorcières* (iii. 131), which is in effect another version of *Le Chat Noir*. Something similar may once have stood in *The Red Pony* (Larminie, *West Irish Folk-Tales*, p. 215), where the disenchantment (p. 218) is confused and distorted.

A Catalan story has this feature in a singularly complicated form. A wolf who has guided the cast-off daughter of a king to his palace, gives her elaborate directions for his own disenchantment. Accordingly the girl builds a fire; kills the wolf; rips him up; catches the dove that emerges; puts the dead wolf in the fire; extracts an egg from inside the dove; breaks it,—and there emerges a beautiful prince, who marries the girl.¹

A queer variation of the skinning process occurs in a Swedish tale, *Kidet ock Kungen*. A kid has become the trusted counsellor of a king. One day he bids the king behead him, turn his skin inside out, and force it on the flayed body again. It was a hard job; but when it was finished, there stood a handsome prince whom the king greeted as his son.² Still more elaborate are the directions given by a helpful ass (a prince under enchantment) in a Færöe story: "You must chop off my head and tail, skin me, cut off my legs, put the head where the tail was and the tail in the neck, turn my hoofs up toward my legs, and sew my hide together about me with the hair inside."³ Here the symbolism of reversing a spell is carried out in a grotesquely thoroughgoing fashion. Compare, for a part of the process, the well-known trick of turning one's coat inside out for luck in gaming, or to prevent being led astray by Robin Goodfellow or other errant sprites.⁴ Turning a somersault is a regular preliminary to transformation in Gypsy stories.⁵ In a legend of Derbyshire, a certain treasure chest in an underground passage "can only be fetched away by a white horse, who must have his feet shod the wrong way about, and who must approach the box with his tail foremost."⁶

In the remarkable Zulu tale of *Umamba*, a prince born in the form

¹ *Maspoms y Labrós*, *Lo Rondallayre*, ii. 104, 110. This will be at once recognized as a variant of the folk-tale best known as *Beauty and the Beast*. There is also a forbidden chamber, or cupboard, as in *Blue Beard*. The elaborate directions for liberating the prince are properly directions for putting an effectual end to a monster with a "separable soul" like Koshchei. Here, then, as in *The Bare-Stripping Hangman*, we have a composite (see p. 8, above).

² Eva Wigström, *Sagen ock Åfventyr upp tecknade i Skåne*, p. 10 (*Nyare Bidrag*, vol. v.).

³ Jakobsen, *Færøske Folkesagn og Åventyr*, p. 399 (cf. pp. 401, 406, 407).

⁴ There is a good instance in Bishop Corbet's *Iter Boreale* (Dryden, *Miscellany Poems*, 1716, vi. 376; Corbet's *Poems*, 4th ed., edited by Gilchrist, 1807, p. 191). Cf. Tyndale, *Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John, Prologue*: "They wander as in a mist, or (as we say) led by Robin Goodfellow, that they cannot come to the right way, no though they turn their caps" (*Works of Tyndale and Frith*, ed. Russell, 1831, ii. 388).

⁵ See Groome, *Gypsy Folk-Tales*, pp. 16, 24, 40, 58, 59; M. Klimo, *Contes et Légendes de Hongrie*, 1898, p. 243.

⁶ S. O. Addy, *Household Tales*, London, 1895, p. 58.

of a snake asks his young wife to anoint him and to pull off his snake-skin, when he appears in his true shape.¹ The teller of the tale seems partly to have rationalized it, as if the prince wore his snake-skin as a disguise. At all events, there is very instructive confusion between a prince in snake-form and a prince concealing his true form by wearing a snake-skin, and the close psychological connection between the idea underlying the belief we are discussing and that which underlies the belief in werewolves and swan-maidens comes out very clearly. It does not appear that *Umamba* would ever have abandoned or been released from his snake-form if he had not found a woman willing to marry him. Thus *Umamba* connects itself with *The Frog Prince*² and similar instances of disenchantment. That the animal skin is conceived of as a *covering* to be stripped off comes out clearly in stories in which the bridegroom is enveloped in several such skins and the bride tells him to take them off.³

In an Armenian tale, *Dragon-Child and Sun-Child*,⁴ we have a clear case of an enchanted prince born in monstrous shape, half man and half dragon, who, when released from the spell, issues from the dragon-skin, which bursts. While in dragon form the prince had been a destructive being, devouring a maiden every week (like St. George's dragon). His habitation is a dry well, and this associates him with the familiar class of water-stopping monsters.

It would be useless, as well as wearisome, to multiply examples further. Enough has been said to make it clear that both *The Carl of Carlisle* and *The Turk and Gawain*, whatever their dates may be, preserve, in the matter of disenchantment, a naïve and ancient superstition, which may fairly claim universal currency.

George Lyman Kittredge.

¹ Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions and History of the Zulus*, i. 327. This is the tale mentioned, without a reference, by H. Husson, *La Chaîne Traditionnelle*, Paris, 1874, p. 130 (cited by Prato, *Bulletin de Folklore*, i. 334). Cf. the Roumanian-Gypsy tale of *The Snake who became the King's Son-in-law*, translated from Constantinescu, *Probe de Limba si Literatura Tiganilor din România*, Bucharest, 1878, no. 3, pp. 61 ff., by Groome, *Gypsy Folk-Tales*, pp. 21–24. See also Giambattista Basile's *Lo Serpe*, *Pentamerone*, ii. 5, ed. Croce, i. 209 ff. (Liebrecht's translation, *Der Pentamerone*, 1846, i. 191 ff.; J. E. Taylor's, *The Pentamerone*, 2d ed., 1850, pp. 153 ff.; Keightley, *Tales and Popular Fictions*, 1834, pp. 185 ff.).

² See pp. 5–6, above.

³ Köhler, *Kleinere Schriften*, i. 318, note 2.

⁴ Seklemian, *The Golden Maiden and other Folk Tales and Fairy Stories told in Armenia*, Cleveland and New York, 1898, pp. 73, 74.